

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 118786

EXDIS, EYES ONLY FOR DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OAKLEY

FOLLOWING REPEAT MANILA 7791 ACTION SECSTATE MAY 21, 1977

QTE C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 7791

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, US, RP

SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS: DISCUSSION WITH MRS. MARCOS

REF: MANILA 7790

1. I INITIATED AND PRESSED A WIDE-RANGING DISCUSSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS DURING THE MARATHON LUNCHEON MAY 21 WITH MRS. MARCOS (SEPTEL). I REFERRED TO MY BRIEFING OF THE MANUFACTURERS HANOVER TRUST CO., (SEPTEL), WHICH SHE HAD HEARD ON TAPE, WHEREIN I HAD OBSERVED THAT ALL THE ISSUES, ACTUAL AND POTENTIAL, IN PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN RELATIONS SEEM MANAGEABLE, EXCEPT PERHAPS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. AND I GAVE HER A TELEPHONE MESSAGE, RECEIVED THE PREVIOUS CONFIDENTIAL

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DAY FROM ASSISTANT SECRETARY HOLBROOKE TO MUCH THE SAME EFFECT. I TOLD HER THAT HOLBROOKE AND I FELT THAT WHILE HUMAN RIGHTS IS A VERY SERIOUS MATTER IN OUR RELATIONS, IT TOO CAN BE MANAGED IF APPROACHED WITH SUSTAINED AND CONSTRUCTIVE ATTENTION.

2. MRS. MARCOS THEN HELD FORTH AT LENGTH ON THE BASIC

COMMITMENT OF THE PRESIDENT AND HERSELF TO HUMAN RIGHTS, OF THEIR DESIRE TO DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE, WITHIN THE LIMITATIONS OF A DEVELOPING COUNTRY, TO PROMOTE THOSE RIGHTS, AND OF THE NEED FOR STRONG LEADERSHIP TO HOLD THE "SCHIZOPHRENIC" PHILIPPINES TOGETHER. SHE SAID "WE DO NOT APPROVE OF ANY DISREGARD FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, BUT IN A COUNTRY OF 44 MILLION THERE WILL INEVITABLY BE THE EXCEPTIONAL FEW WHO DO." NONETHELESS, SHE CONCLUDED, "HUMAN RIGHTS PLUS LOVE EQUAL COMPASSION, AND THAT IS THE PRESIDENT'S AND MY POLICY."

3. I SAID ON THAT BASIS AND ON THE BASIS OF PRESIDENT MARCOS' SPENDID STATEMENT ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN HIS RECENT SPEECH BEFORE THE ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK BOARD, I WAS CONFIDENT THAT OUR TWO COUNTRIES COULD WORK TOGETHER TO ADVANCE THE CAUSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS. IN THIS REGARD WE ARE NOT TYRING TO TELL THE GOP WHAT TO DO, AND IN THAT SPIRIT, I WOULD LIKE TO SUGGEST THAT WE CONSIDER HOW WE MIGHT COOPERATE IN THE COMMON CAUSE. I THEN DISCUSSED AND GAVE HER A PAPER ON SOME THOUGHTS CONCERNING A HUMAN RIGHTS STRATEGY AS FOLLOWS:

A. OBJECTIVE: ESTABLISH A HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD THAT WILL NEUTRALIZE CRITICISM AND ATTRACT SUPPORT AT HOME AND ABROAD.

1. YOU CAN AFFORD TO DO IT.

--STRONG ENOUGH DOMESTICALLY,
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--EVERYTHING TO GAIN INTERNATIONALLY.

2. YOU CAN'T AFFORD NOT TO DO IT.

--GROWING SOURCE OF COMMENT DOMESTICALLY,
PARTICULARLY AMONG THE YOUNG "BRIGHTEST AND BEST."

--CHRONIC SOURCE OF FRICTION AND POTENTIAL
TIME BOMB IN PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN RELATIONS (R H MESSAGE).

B. PROBLEM: A LACK OF CREDIBILITY.

C. SOLUTION:

1. SUSTAINED HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN.

2. SELECTIVE HIGH-IMPACT DEMONSTRATIVE SIGNALS
FOR DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL EFFECT.

D. HAZARDS:

1. RHETORIC WITHOUT SUBSTANCE.

2. INITIATIVE WITHOUT FOLLOW THROUGH.

E. SHORT-RUN TACTICS (I.E., THROUGH WORLD PEACE
THROUGH LAW CONFERENCE);

1. IMPACT CASES

A. HERRARA (ALREADY HAS DOMESTIC AND
INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION) "CLEAN SWEEP"

--INVESTIGATE THOROUGHLY

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--CHARGE ALL DIRECTLY AND INDIRECTLY
INVOLVED

--MAXIMIZE EFFECTS BY OPEN TRIAL (OBSERVERS)
AND FULL PUBLICITY

B. AQUINO/LOPEZ ET AL (LONG-STANDING CAUSE CELEBRE).

2. RELATED PROCEDURAL REFORMS AND CONTROLS (WITH
DUE PUBLICITY)

3. DIALOGUE OF PUBLIC STATEMENTS: PRESIDENT
MARCOS SPLENDID ADB STATEMENT; CHARGE' SPEECH ALONG LINES
OF THAT BY SECRETARY VANCE OF APRIL 30. POSSIBLE
ELABORATION OF GOP HUMAN RIGHTS OBJECTIVES BY PRESIDENT
MARCOS.

A. FAVORABLE TEXTUAL INTERACTION.

B. DEVELOP GOP PUBLIC RECORD BY WPTL CON-
FERENCE.

F. LONG RUN TACTICS:

1. ECONOMIC DIMENSION

2. POLITICAL DIMENSION

3. SUSTAINED INDIVIDUAL DIMENSION

4. MRS. MARCOS LISTENED ATTENTIVELY AND STUDIED THE

STRATEGY OUTLINE CAREFULLY. SHE ASKED FOR A COPY OF SECRETARY VANCE'S SPEECH OF APRIL 30 WHICH I GAVE HER. SHE NOTED THAT THE AQUINO CASE IS SUB JUDICE, WHICH MUST RUN ITS COURSE, BUT "WE UNDERSTAND HE HAS AN OFFER TO TEACH AT HARVARD AND WE WOULD BE DELIGHTED TO HAVE HIM

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OFF OUR HANDS." SHE ASKED ABOUT MY PROPOSED SPEECH, AND I REPLIED THAT IN LIGHT OF OUR DISCUSSION, I HAD DECIDED TO DELIVER A SPEECH THE NEXT DAY ON HUMAN RIGHTS INTER ALIA, THAT I WOULD NOT CRITICIZE THE PHILIPPINES, THAT I WOULD CITE THE PRESIDENT'S ADB STATEMENT WHICH WE CAN EMBRACE AND PROCEED FROM IN A COOPERATIVE EFFORT, THAT I WOULD SEND HER MY TEXT TOMORROW AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, AND THAT I HOPED THE SPEECH WOULD RECEIVE GOOD MEDIA TREATMENT, SINCE IT IS MY IMPRESSION THAT THE HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY OF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION IS ONLY POORLY UNDERSTOOD IN THE PHILIPPINES. MRS. MARCOS SAID SHE HOPED AND BELIEVED THAT THE CARTER POLICY WOULD BE MODIFIED TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES. I REPLIED THAT I BELIEVED SHE WOULD SEE THAT THE POLICY ALREADY DOES JUST THAT.

5. IN THE END, MRS. MARCOS TUCKED THE OUTLINE INTO HER PURSE AND SAID "WE WILL STUDY THIS MATTER, AND YOU MAY BE ASSURED THAT WE WILL DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE WITHIN THE LIMITS OF A DEVELOPING COUNTRY TO ADVANCE THE CAUSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS."

6. COMMENT: I BELIEVE THE MARCOSES WOULD LIKE TO GET ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS BANDWAGON. THE STRATEGY IS TO PERSUADE THEM TO DO JUST THAT, TO PERSUADE THEM THAT WHILE RHETORIC AND GESTURES ARE NOT WITHOUT SIGNIFICANCE, THERE MUST BE A CONSIDERABLE SUBSTANTIVE EFFORT AS WELL IF THEIR COMMITMENT IS TO BE CREDIBLE. IF THIS STRATEGY IS TO HAVE ANY CHANCE OF SUCCESS, OUR ROLE MUST BE SEEN TO BE A COOPERATIVE RATHER THAN A DIRECTIVE ONE. THIS WILL BE DIFFICULT, SINCE CONTINUING SIGNALS, CONCRETE AS WELL AS ORAL, PROBABLY WILL BE NECESSARY TO PERSUADE THEM OF OUR SUSTAINED INTEREST AND SERIOUSNESS. IN THIS REGARD, MRS. MARCOS NODDED WITH APPROVAL WHEN I POINTED OUT THAT I HAD AVOIDED ALL TEMPTATION TO TAKE ANY CREDIT FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL DIRECTIVE RELEASING MRS. HERRARA,

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INSTITUTING AN INVESTIGATION AND ORDERING A COURT

MARTIAL. WE OF COURSE SHALL CONTINUE THIS POSTURE. A
MORE DIFFICULT PROBLEM FOR THE US GOVERNMENT WILL BE WHEN
AND IF WE SHOULD GIVE THE GOP POSITIVE CREDIT, SINCE THAT
JUDGMENT NECESSARILY WILL TURN ON CAREFUL ESTIMATES OF
WHAT ACTUALLY HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED, AND HOW THAT
ACCOMPLISHMENT IS VIEWED IN THE PHILIPPINES. TOO MUCH
CREDIT FOR TOO LITTLE WOULD BE HARMFUL, AND TOO LITTLE
OR NO CREDIT AT ALL WOULD BE TO MISS AN OPPORTUNITY TO
ENCOURAGE MORE PERFORMANCE. WE SHALL FOLLOW THIS
INTRICATE MATTER CLOSELY.
STULL UNQTE VANCE

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